

Message Text

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E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MARR, MILI

SUBJECT: VIEWS OF THE URUGUAYAN MILITARY

1. ON MARCH 17, URUGUAYAN AIR FORCE DAY, I HAD MY FIRST CONTACT WITH VARIOUS URUGUAYAN MILITARY LEADERS SINCE THE EVENTS OF EARLY FEBRUARY. WE ARE MAINTAINING AN ESPECIALLY LOW PROFILE DURING THIS TROUBLED PERIOD. THERE FOLLOW A FEW OBSERVATIONS FROM THESE CONTACTS WHICH MAY BE OF INTEREST TO ADDRESSEES.

2. AT ONE POINT CINC AIR FORCE GENERAL PEREZ CALDAS ESCORTED ME TO PRESIDENT BORDABERRY WITH WHOM I HAD PREVIOUSLY HAD A BRIEF, INCONSEQUENTIAL CONVERSATION. HE REMINDED THE PRESIDENT THAT HE WAS TO ASK THE USG TO ACCELERATE THE DELIVERY OF A UH1 H HELICOPTER PURCHASED BY THE UAF UNDER FMS. PEREZ CALDAS REMINDED THE PRESIDENT THAT HE HAD ASKED HIM TO RAISE THIS WITH ME SEVERAL WEEKS AGO. THE PRESIDENT, PUT ON THE SPOT BY PEREZ CALDAS, THEN ASKED ME TO ACCELERATE THE DELIVERY OF THE HELICOPTER. I SAID I WOULD SEND A MESSAGE CONVEYING HIS REQUEST (SEPTTEL). CURIOUS IN THIS INCIDENT WAS THE PRE- EMPTORY MANNER USED BY PESEZ CALDAS WITH THE PRESIDENT AS WELL AS FOR THE PRESIDENT'S APPARENT ACQUIESENCE IN SUCH PROCEEDINGS.

3. FOR PAST THREE WEEKS GENERAL DANTE PALADINI, UAF CHIEF OF
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STAFF HAS ATTEMPTED TO CONVINCE THE BMASSY THROUGH MILGP THAT THE US SHOULD GIVE ALL- OUT SUPPORT TO THE UAF AS A " COUNTER BALANCE" BETWEEN THE CONTENDING ARMY AND NAVY. PALADINI REQUESTS A MAJOR MILITARY GRANT BY THE US AS A MEANS OF " IMPROVING THE ATMOSPHERE". PALADINI HAS ALLEGED TO US MILGP THAT SOME ELEMENTS IN URUGUAYAN ARMY CONSIDERED USG FAVORED CIVILIANS OVER THE MILITARY AND THE NAVY OVER THE OTHER SERVICES IN THE CURRENT SITUATION. THESE SAME ELEMENTS ALSO DISAPPROVE OF CONTACTS BY EMBASSY POLITICAL SECTION WITH SUCH POLITICIANS AS SENATOR FERREIRA ALDUNATE. THERE IS ALSO A SUSPICION THAT A CRITICAL NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL WAS INSPIRED BY USG. I TOLD GEN. PALADINI THAT IN VIEW OF HIS OBSERVATIONS IT WAS IMPORTANT TO CLEAR THE AIR OF MISUNDERSTANDINGS. HE REPLIED THAT PROBLEMS US HAD FEW WEEKS AGO WITH ARMY WERE NOW MUCH IMPROVED, APPARENTLY BECAUSE CERTAIN ANTI- US ELEMENTS IN THE MILITARY HAD LOST INFLUENCE. PALADINI SAID NEVERTHELESS HE WOULD BE APPROACHING EMBASSY SOON TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE INCREASE IN US ASSISTANCE TO AIR FORCE.

4. WHEN I EXPRESSED TO KEY ARMY LEADER, GEN. ALVAREZ, EMBASSY'S GRATIFICATION THAT JOINT FORCES HAD IDENTIFIED AND APPREHENDED MURDERERS OF DAN MITRIONE, GENERAL ALVAREZ SAID THAT HE SHOULD NOT RECEIVE THE CREDIT FOR THIS ACTION, BUT THAT GEN. CRISTI, COMMANDER OF THE FIRST MILITARY REGION, DESERVED TO BE CONGRATULATED. I WAS UNABLE TO HAVE ANY SORT OF USEFUL EXCHANGE WITH GEN. CRISTI ON THIS OCCASION. HOWEVER, I EXPECT TO SEE HIM AT A MILITARY PARTY EVENING MARCH 23. GEN. ALVAREZ SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO CONVERSE ONE DAY ABOUT OPERATIONS OF US NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL.

5. ALL OF THESE CONTACTS TOOK PLACE AT A CEREMONIAL PUBLIC OCCASION. THEY WERE MORE OR LESS PRO FORMA AND NOTHING OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE CAN BE DEDUCED FROM THEM. NEVERTHELESS I SENSE THAT OUR FUTURE RELATIONS WITH URUGUAY WILL OF NECESSITY BE INFLUENCED BY HOW WE MANAGE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE VARIOUS MILITARY LEADERS. A MORE DISQUIETING GUESS IS THAT THE URUGUAYAN MILITARY ARE PROBABLY DRAWING UP SOME SORT OF " SHOPPING LIST" TO BE PRESENTED US AS AN EARNEST OF OUR UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT.

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